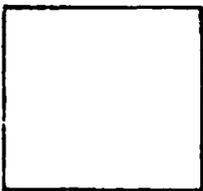


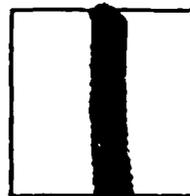
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February 1955

A PROPOSAL FOR ASSESSING "ATTITUDE"
IN SURVIVAL TRAINING

E. Paul Torrance

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THIS LABORATORY NOTE

- ... presents a tentative plan for assessing "attitude" in Advanced Survival Training;
- ... was prepared in response to a request from the Training Analysis and Development Unit of the 3635th Training Group for suggestions for objective and as valid a method as possible for evaluating "attitude" in Advanced Survival Training;
- ... is not a "finished plan" but is presented in this form to facilitate discussion;
- ... will be of interest to Training Analysis and Development personnel; others concerned with evaluation of performance in Advanced, Basic, and other survival training programs; survival instructors; officers charged with the orientation of trainees concerning survival training; and psychologists interested in developing behavioral measures of attitude.

A PROPOSAL FOR ASSESSING "ATTITUDE" IN SURVIVAL TRAINING*

E. Paul Torrance

Throughout the history of the Advanced Survival School, "attitude" has been considered an important aspect of trainee performance and some effort has been made at assessment. In general, it has been assumed that even though "attitude" is an intangible phenomenon, everyone "knows" what it is and can tell when a trainee has a "bad attitude."

That "attitude" is important in survival training and in survival is unquestioned. One social psychologist has stated that attitudes provide us with the best guide we have for predicting performance (4). Since evaluation of performance in survival training should indicate an aircrewman's readiness or lack of readiness to survive various types of emergencies and extreme conditions, "attitude" demands an important role in the evaluation program of any survival training course.

That everyone knows what "attitude" is and can tell when a trainee has a "bad attitude" is quite doubtful. Survival instructors have varied concepts about what constitutes "attitude" and very few have a well-organized approach to evaluating "attitude" as "good" or "bad." Too frequently, "attitude as evaluated" means "attitude toward the instructor" rather than "attitude as affecting chances of survival in emergencies or extreme conditions."

In this paper, an attempt will be made to present a research-based rationale for assessing "attitude" in survival training and an operationally practical plan of evaluation embodying the principles involved in this rationale.

THE ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT PROBLEM

To understand the problem of attitude measurement and to develop a plan for assessing attitude, it is necessary to adopt some definition of "attitude." One social psychologist defines attitude as "an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world" (2, p. 152). Another defines it more simply as "a state of readiness" or "predisposition to become motivated with regard to something" (4). Thus, if "attitude" is "enduring," "a state of readiness

* This paper is an informal note and is subject to modification or withdrawal at any time. If referenced, it should be described as an "unpublished draft."

or predisposition, " it should be possible to identify behavioral indicators of attitudes manifested in simulated survival exercises which may be expected to be operative in an actual survival situation, only in a clearer fashion. For example, it is not anticipated that a trainee will manifest an attitude which might be labelled as "loss of will to survive," during advanced survival training. It is quite possible, however, that the simulated situation might elicit attitudes which might well result in a "loss of will to survive" in a more dangerous situation in which he would be "playing for keeps."

Social psychologists have developed many rather sophisticated methodologies for measuring attitudes, mostly of a pencil-and-paper variety (1, 2, 4). They have recognized that attitudes are predispositions which may or may not find expression in "opinions" or "actions" and are not likely to find such expression whenever the security of the individual is endangered. Thus, they have attempted to develop more subtle or indirect methods which would overcome the limitations of the more direct techniques such as inventories, opinionnaires, and rating scales.

From a practical, operational standpoint, such methods cannot be depended upon, even if they could be demonstrated to be valid and reliable. The survival instructor needs to be concerned only with attitudes expressed through behavior. Since many of the simulated survival situations become quite real to most trainees, many attitudes are expressed which would never be manifested through less stressful instruments. Thus, the major problem is to identify behavioral manifestations of attitudes which can be observed and evaluated by the crew instructor.

Before such indicators can be identified, it is necessary to establish a rationale to guide their selection. In earlier attempts to establish check-lists for evaluating "attitude" (9,10,12), instructors were interviewed concerning the indicators they were using in evaluating trainees on "attitude." Almost all of the indicators identified by them and included in the resultant check-lists were concerned with the trainee's eagerness to learn -- his attitude toward instruction, the instructor, the School, etc. If survival training is concerned with "attitude as affecting chances of survival," the predominant concept embodied in earlier check-lists is inadequate. Concern should be with attitudes which endanger or enhance chances of survival. This would, of course, include attitudes which prevent trainees from learning. The deciding factor, however, should be whether or not chances of survival are endangered.

In the section which follows, an attempt will be made to draw from survival research to establish a set of behavioral indicators of attitudes affecting chances of survival in emergencies and extreme conditions.

ATTITUDES AFFECTING CHANCES OF SURVIVAL

Research concerning the psychological aspects of survival (5,6,7,8) permits the identification of six major types of attitudes which endanger chances of survival: (a) attitudes which result in a loss of will to survive, (b) frustration, (c) concessions to comfort, (d) "it can't happen to me,"

(e) "to hell with you, Joe; I've got mine," and (f) negativism. Although there is some degree of overlap among these categories, an effort has been made to define each of the categories and the behaviors subsumed under them in such a way as to eliminate as much as possible of this overlap.

Lack of Will to Survive

A by-word of survival training has always been: "Keep up your will to survive!" Actually, no trainee is likely to lose his will to survive during advanced survival training. Many, however, are likely to manifest attitudes during their training which would be equivalent to losing one's will to survive in a real survival situation or would likely lead to a loss of will to survive. Of course, it cannot be "proved" that this is "true," but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that it is "true." What are some of the signs of such attitudes?

For our purposes, "will to survive" has been defined as "continued adaptive behavior and the successful control of tension." "Failure to survive, because of a loss of will to do so, may be considered to be either a settling-in of apathy, or the arousal of extreme panic. As a result, the person is unwilling or unable to deal with new crises as they arise" (11). There are many tests in the advanced survival course which may be considered as "tests of will to survive" and the alert instructor can introduce many more.

The following four sub-categories have been developed to constitute the "loss of will to survive" category:

1. Failure to take adaptive action when the situation changes: This sub-category refers to the general apathetic reaction involved in loss of will to survive. In survival training, this may be manifested by a slowness in responding to a change in the situation, or an actual failure to respond. The individual may remain inactive or idle at times when there is a need for action. He needs prompting at the end of breaks and has to be "driven" in order to influence him to accomplish essential actions.

2. Failure to take care of essential survival needs: Actually, this sub-category might be regarded as a special case of "failure to take adaptive action." It seems advantageous, however, to establish it as a separate sub-category. Relative attitudes or predispositions may be expressed here when the individual fails to eat the food that is available and makes no real effort to obtain other food. It is the kind of behavior which was manifested by POW's in North Korean prisons when men chose to die rather than eat the kind of food which was available. This attitude may also be manifested when a man becomes dehydrated because he fails to take the trouble to melt snow or does not take adequate action to obtain water. It may also be manifested when a man fails to build a shelter because he is too tired or in some other way fails to take care of essential physical needs.

3. Reckless, panic-like behavior: This sub-category refers to the arousal of extreme panic already discussed in connection with the will-to-survive. Under pressure of continued failure, fatigue, and the like, behavior tends to become reckless or don't care. The individual takes unwarranted

chances. He fails to pinpoint himself on his map at crucial points. He selects routes without surveying the situation. He fights blindly rather than avoid dangers by strategy or adaptation.

4. Lack of self-esteem: Some individuals lose their will-to-survive because of lack of self-esteem. Such individuals may lack self-pride and assume a "don't care" attitude about training and taking care of themselves. These are the men who go for the two weeks of training without taking a bath, "lives like a pig," fails to observe the most elementary rules of camp and trail sanitation, etc. He may also lack self-confidence because he does not believe that he has the ability to take care of himself and may be overcome by his anxiety and give up. A man may show an equivalent attitude in training when he considers some survival skill too difficult to master and does not continue trying to learn it. He may also express feelings of unworthiness and rejection by the group.

Frustration Behavior

For purposes of evaluating "attitude" in survival training, "frustration behavior" may be defined as "non-adaptive acts in response to a blocking of the achievement of a goal, an act which is not likely to contribute to survival and may actually endanger chances of survival." In evaluating behavior in this category, it will be necessary to decide first whether or not the response is likely to lead to survival or is a distraction from the goal of survival. Next, it will be necessary to decide which of the following types of distracted behavior is used by the subject.

5. Emotional outbursts of temper: This sub-category includes emotional outbursts of temper which represent a distraction from the goal of survival. Some emotional outbursts may release tension and then permit the individual or the group to go ahead in a positive direction to solve the problem, get themselves out of their predicament, or alleviate an unpleasant or threatening situation. Such behavior should not be rated as frustration behavior. Included are: extreme irritability and repeated shortness of temper, abusiveness, destruction of equipment or other property in a fit of temper, and the like.

6. Blaming others: This sub-category does not refer to normal fixing of responsibility in a group. It refers to unjustly blaming others for mistakes and other blaming behavior which represents a distraction from the goal or rejection of one's own responsibility. In survival training, relevant attitudes are likely to be expressed when the crew chooses a poor route or makes some other decision for which there is joint responsibility.

7. Non-aggressive, non-adaptive behavior: This category refers to a pre-disposition to react to frustration by various types of withdrawal behavior. The trainee may become moody and depressed. He may be seclusive and fail to communicate with the other members of his group. He may be "too tired to do anything" or avoid participating in activities because of physical disabilities or hypochondriacal complaints (complaints based on a strong need for sympathy from others). He may just "throw up his hands" and find the situation too much to cope with.

Concessions to Comfort

Most USAF airmen have learned to appreciate and enjoy comfort and the endurance of discomfort is not a virtue. It is, therefore, necessary for them to be aware of the dangers of making concessions to comfort. This does not mean that airmen should not be trained to make themselves as comfortable as possible without compromising their chances of survival. They should. At the same time, they should be taught the dangers of making concessions to comfort which are likely to result in much greater discomfort to themselves, discomfort or loss of life to others, and even loss of life to themselves.

8. Taking unnecessary and dangerous risks: This does not refer to the boldness or the taking of necessary risks which are found in many successful survival experiences. It refers to the taking of unnecessary and dangerous risks. A very real example of this in survival training is the taking of commercial food on the trek or obtaining commercial food from a merchant or rancher at some point during the trek. This risk is not necessary because the trainee is issued adequate food for survival and the maintenance of strength and energy. It is dangerous because it is in direct violation of specific regulations and the individual risks failing the course. An evader may become tired of "creeping and crawling" over difficult terrain and may choose to walk, or he may choose to travel down a road rather than travel under cover. He may become impatient in his effort to "wait out" a guard or avoid some other danger, and unnecessarily expose himself.

9. Carrying a light load: This sub-category refers to behavior through which the trainee seeks to lighten his load by leaving behind important equipment or losing it in order to lighten his load. On flights, he is the man who can't be bothered with wearing a parachute or carrying survival equipment.

10. Taking the easy way out: This sub-category refers to acts whereby the individual endangers his safety by "taking the easy way out." During survival training, he may "duck out" of parts of the training or try to influence the instructor to omit some phase of the training. He may choose to walk down a creek of icy water and then fail to make a fire to thaw out rather than take a safer but more difficult route over a ridge. In a blizzard in deep snow, he may erect a very shoddy shelter without digging down into the snow. He may lose a valuable piece of equipment and "feel too tired" to take a few steps to recover it. Wet and tired, he may climb into his sleeping bag immediately without building a fire to dry his clothing or without removing his clothing.

It Can't Happen to Me

The "it-can't-happen-to-me" attitude is perhaps the most dangerous single attitude found among combat crew personnel. During survival training, this attitude should be replaced by the idea that "it won't happen to me, but I'll

be prepared just in case." This is just another way of stating the old philosophy, "Expect the best but be prepared for the worst." This attitude is manifested in many ways during survival training, usually in some form of resistance to learning.

11. Lack of attention and participation: The "it-can't-happen-to-me" attitude may be manifested by the trainee's failure to pay attention to lectures, demonstrations, and other instructions. He may actually go to sleep during instruction or he may just "day dream" or attend to other things. This attitude may also be shown through failure to participate actively and voluntarily in training exercises, problems, or discussions. His attitude is: "I'll never need this stuff."

12. Failure to practice and to apply what has been taught: Resistance to learning may also be manifested by failure to practice and to "overlearn" basic survival skills and emergency procedures. Listening to an explanation or performing the act once is enough for him. He cannot understand the necessity for practice and overlearning. To him, information contained in lectures and other instruction is just so many facts and he sees no relationship between these facts and what he is doing in the field. At least, he fails to apply what he has been taught to problems in the field.

13. Failure to play the game: Attitudes relevant to this sub-category are manifested by the trainee who is overly aware that he is a trainee and feels that he is immune to danger in the training situation. In the actual survival situation, he is the man who can't believe that it has happened to him; it is just a dream. In the intelligence exercise, he refuses to play the role of the evader or the prisoner. He "falls out of role" or reminds those conducting the exercise that he is a trainee and that this is just a simulated situation. He expects his instructor to assume responsibility for his safety and protect him from danger. His favorite excuse is: "Yes, I did poorly in this situation, but I wouldn't in the real thing."

14. Failure to recognize own deficiencies: The attitude of omnipotence implied in the "it-can't-happen-to-me" fallacy is commonly manifested by a failure to recognize one's own deficiencies and tendencies which get him into serious difficulty. These deficiencies may be glaringly obvious to everyone else, but he thinks he is "doing fine." If the instructor points out the deficiency, he may rationalize it as unimportant or actually interpret it as a compliment. He does little or nothing to remedy his deficiencies.

"To hell with you, Joe; I've got mine."

An attitude described as common among POW's in communist operated camps in North Korea has been aptly described by the expression, "To hell with you, Joe; I've got mine." It has been described by others as "putting one's own survival ahead of the best interests of the groups." Almost always, this attitude works to the detriment of everyone, even the individual who "has his" at the time. The importance of mutual support and standing by one another has been demonstrated in all kinds of group survival situations.

15. Lack of cooperation with the group: This sub-category refers to failure to cooperate in the achievement of group goals. It should be applied when a trainee fails to participate in group tasks, group decisions, and activities essential to the welfare of the group. He does not perform his rightful share of duties such as obtaining wood, constructing shelters, cooking, carrying crew equipment, breaking trail, disposing of garbage, constructing sanitary facilities, etc.

16. Lack of concern for fellow crewmembers: This category should be applied when a trainee fails to show concern for the welfare of another member of his crew. A companion may stumble over a high embankment or break his leg and such an individual would make no move to assist him. He makes himself oblivious to the suffering of other members of his group. He refuses to share equipment and supplies needed in accomplishing group goals.

17. Monopolizes facilities and grabs more than share: This sub-category applies when a trainee always rushes to get ahead of the rest of the crew in the use of a piece of equipment. He may wait for some time to use it but "it is his" and he won't permit anyone else to use it. It also applies when an individual grabs more than his share of food or other supplies, even if someone else has to do without. He is strictly for himself and believes strongly in "the survival of the fittest."

Negativism

Negativistic attitudes are held by men who reject authority and fail to follow instructions. In aircraft accidents, they fail to follow emergency procedures. They find themselves in survival emergencies without parachutes and other necessary or important survival equipment which they were "required" to have. When exposed to extreme cold, they contract frostbite because they fail to do what they have been told to do. Such an attitude endangers chances of survival.

18. Rejects orders and instructions: The major characteristic of the negativistic attitude is refusal to follow orders or instructions. The negativistic individual either does the opposite of what he is told or refuses to do anything about the situation. He opposes authority and discipline -- nobody is going to tell him what to eat, nobody is going to tell him what to wear, nobody is going to tell him how to make his bed, etc.

19. Lack of confidence in equipment and rescue: This sub-category should be applied to expressions of lack of confidence in survival equipment, survival information given in lectures and other types of instruction, and rescue plans. The trainee, manifesting this attitude, loudly announces the fact that various pieces of survival equipment are "no good." "The lecturer is all wrong. The information given by the instructor is incorrect. Rescue squadrons are made up of loafers who wouldn't go a step out of their way to save you."

20. Lack of confidence in fellow crew members: This sub-category is an extension of the preceding attitude and reflects the individual's feeling that he can depend only upon himself. He has no respect for the judgments and decisions of the other members of the crew. Only he is right. He depreciates or rejects all opinions or judgments expressed by fellow crew members and cannot trust them to accomplish a job without his close supervision or his actually doing it.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLACING INTO OPERATION A NEW PLAN FOR ASSESSING "ATTITUDE" IN ADVANCED SURVIVAL TRAINING

It is recommended that the following procedure be followed in placing into operation any new plan for assessing "attitude" in survival training:

1. Training Analysis and Development personnel and others concerned with the establishment of training objectives, standards, and concepts should discuss the proposal contained herein and agree upon the relevant attitudes to be assessed.

2. After a plan of evaluation has been tentatively agreed upon, the plan should be tried out by a small group of instructors who thoroughly understand the concepts involved. Briefing would include discussions with Training Analysis and Development personnel and personnel of the Survival Research Field Unit. If possible, two or more instructors should evaluate the same crew. Revisions indicated by this tryout should then be effected.

3. After this, a thorough indoctrination of instructors should follow. This should include rating some group which can be observed by several individuals so that common frames of reference can be developed and that there is some degree of reliability from instructor to instructor. This can be arranged in a number of ways. Several instructors could observe the same crew for a half day during their training at the base (parachute training, rifle firing, etc.) or at static camp. They could then examine differences and similarities in ratings and thereby develop common frames of reference. Element leaders or other supervisory personnel could observe and evaluate crews and compare their ratings with the instructor's ratings.

4. Each class of trainees should also be given some orientation concerning the importance of the attitudes with which the school is concerned. Many of the relevant attitudes are now discussed in the lecture on "Survival Psychology," but this is not adequate for purposes relevant to evaluation.

The appendix includes a suggested score sheet for the use of instructors and further suggestions for making evaluations.

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APPENDIX

SUGGESTIONS FOR RECORDING AND MAKING EVALUATIONS ON "ATTITUDE"

It is suggested that a score sheet similar to the one on the next page be used by instructors as a work sheet in arriving at their evaluations of "Attitude" in the Advanced Survival Course. The highest possible number of points is 100. The resultant raw score, however, should be converted to whatever type of score is going to be used in the remainder of the evaluation program -- satisfactory-unsatisfactory, T-score, or other type of "standard score."

It should be made clear to instructors that observations used in making evaluations can be made during any aspect of training -- lectures, demonstrations, crew discussions, displays, briefings, the Short Trek, static camp, Long Trek, final written examination, etc. It is believed that it is possible for an instructor to make all of the relevant observations discussed in this Note, but it will be necessary for him to understand the concepts embodied in them and he will have to be alert to "what is going on." This, however, should contribute to the improvement of his instruction.

